

THE SHAMBLES OF THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to recap what we have done today and what we are doing in this House. There are certain protocols that prohibit us from saying things like wake up, America, listen to the debates of this House, and to the concerns of this Nation. This is the holiday time, the time that schools are getting out, families are coming together for vacations. So this is a good time for the smoke and mirrors legislation of this body, dominated by those who have no simple or at least appreciation for the enormous task that we have in putting this Nation back together again.

Let me simply recount, Mr. Speaker, the journey that we are taking. We realize that 21 days this Nation was at war, and that we were able to come under budget for a war that many disagreed with but not with the valiant work of our young people. Unfortunately, as we projected about the needs of this Nation and a war with Iraq, we failed to take into consideration the aftermath, the tragedy of 51 young men and valiant heroes that have lost their lives since the ending of this war, the cost of maintaining 160,000-plus soldiers on the front lines, the \$1 billion a month that we are spending in Afghanistan in the war against terrorism, the large number of dollars that are necessary and not yet expended with respect to homeland security.

As a member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, I realize that many of our local governments are asking and pleading for dollars for their first responders.

In the backdrop of that, we have a growing deficit and an increasing unemployment. College graduates are coming out with wonderful diplomas and great smiles of admiration by their family, and yet they can find no work.

This body of course is now trying to grapple with the issue of a guaranteed Medicare prescription drug benefit for the seniors that we promised them for now 8 years, and what are we giving to them? A mere \$400 billion. It sounds like a big number, but we are going to leave the seniors holding the bag by, in actuality, having a gap. That means rather than getting a guaranteed prescription drug benefit in Medicare, we are going to tell seniors to go out and be fishers of men, fishers of HMOs, fishers of low-cost drugs. This is what we are going to give them. They have to go out and shop for HMOs that will give them a drug benefit, and then if they spend up to \$2,000, forget about it.

They have got to pay for it the rest of it until they hit \$5,000. Some seniors will fall through the cracks, and maybe some will lose their lives because of their inability to get the prescription drugs. We can spend a whole bunch of

money on doing things that are really not necessary, \$1 trillion tax cut to the likes of Warren Buffett, who said that he is paying less taxes than his receptionist, one of the richest men in the world. We gave a big tax cut with a big deficit, and now we cannot give our seniors a protection that we have been pleading for for 8 years.

We now have come to the floor of the House and the eloquent statesmen who were making these points about the taxpayer bill that we just passed, or that we will vote on, and I wish all of us could have voted on it in a bipartisan way, the eloquence of saying we are giving a tax credit, but what they are doing is they are eliminating the opportunity for some laid-off workers to get health care by the State by passing this bill. So they are undermining the very needs of those who are in most need, working men and women.

Right now we have been trying to pass a child tax credit for those making between \$11,000 and \$26,000. Those are our young men and women in the United States military. They make \$1,000 a month. Their families are back home. We are trying to give them a tax credit. What is happening? Republican friends want to give an \$82 billion tax giveaway, stalling the bill so we cannot get the bill to the President's desk. The President said he would sign the Senate bill, the same bill we want to pass. Within hours, that bill could be signed right now at the picnic that they are getting ready to have. That bill could be signed, and we would be providing a tax cut to the young men and women, families that are overseas, military men and women making \$1,000 a month.

Mr. Speaker, I have got to say that we have got to fix the shambles of the legislative agenda, begin to stand up and speak for the American people who are in need, and it is time for the American people to wake up and understand what is occurring on the floor of the House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PRESIDENTIAL INQUIRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, the House has adjourned its regular busi-

ness for today, and they have gone off to the White House for a picnic; so I do not suppose very many of them will be in their office listening to this, but I think they should at least consider the fact that today's newspapers and the BBC news, the ABC news, the Economist, all come together in saying the war is not over, boys. Three more dead in Baghdad in violence. There was a drive-by shooting at a petrol station. It sounds a little like some of our cities. And we are there bringing them democracy. I guess that is what democracy means to our President. I do not know. It is hard to know. But when I was reading these articles, I thought of one that I read recently. This is dated March 21, not so long ago. "A United Nations survey of civilian damage caused by the allied bombardment of Iraq calls the results near apocalyptic. The survey, which was made public today, recommends an immediate end to the embargo on imports of food and other essential supplies to prevent imminent catastrophe."

This article went on further to say that the U.S. position is that by "making life uncomfortable for the Iraqi people, it," meaning sanctions, "will eventually encourage them to remove President Saddam Hussein from power." This is what the situation was. This is from 1991. We intended to get rid of Saddam Hussein from 1991 on, at least. And for the President and his advisers to come around here saying it just happened since 9/11 and all that kind of stuff is absolutely nonsense.

At the time that one of the Air Force planners said big picture, we want people to know, get rid of this guy and we will be more than happy to assist in the rebuilding. We are not going to tolerate Saddam Hussein and his regime. Fix that and we will fix their electricity. That is what the United States was saying in 1991. This is the country that wants to bring democracy to Iraq. And it goes on.

I mean, it is really wonderful. One planner said, people say you did not recognize that it was going to have an effect on water or sewage? Well, what were we trying to do? Help out the Iraqi people? No. What we were doing with the attacks on infrastructure was to accelerate the effect of sanctions. We bombed the sewer pumping stations. We bombed the water pumping stations. We bombed the television. We bombed the telephone. We bombed everything because we were going to inflict pain on the Iraqi people.

Now if we roll fast forward to today, people in the White House, and I do not know how they could have been thinking about it, Mr. Speaker, that these people were going to be just waiting, so excited to have the Americans come in and bring them democracy.

What kind of fools could plan and state publicly what they were doing and then expect people to be grateful that they were bombed, that their hospitals had no electricity for the refrigeration to save the children and the